

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2201

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CARIO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AUSUN NEW YORK 305

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: APRIL 12 SYRIAN MEDIA REPORTING ON LEBANON

1. MORNING DAMASCUS BROADCAST REPORTED ON-GOING CONSULTATIONS IN BEIRUT TO END LEBANESE CRISIS. MENTIONED KAMAL AS'AD'S INTENTION TO MEET WITH PARLIMENTARY BLOC LEADERS TO DISCUSS CANDIDATES AND STATEMENTS CARRIED BY WIRE SERVICES EXPRESSING HIS AND KARAME'S VIEWS ON NEXT POLITICAL MOVES.

2. TISHRIIN BANNERED: "LEBANON SEARCHES FOR NEW PRESIDENT. CEASEFIRE PERIOD EXTENDED. KARAME CALLS FOR RESTORATION OF NORMAL LIFE." ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE CONTAINED SANA
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RELEASE ANNOUNCING LEBANESE LEFTISTS MET LAST NIGHT AND

AGREED TO EXTEND CEASEFIRE UNTIL END OF APRIL. ARTICLE CLAIMED THAT CALM PREVAILED IN MOST LEBANESE REGIONS DESPITE SCATTERED INDIVIDUAL INCIDENTS. CITED VIEWS OF "POLITICAL CIRCLES" THAT SIGNING OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WILL BE COMPLETED WITHOUT COMPLICATIONS. TISHRIIN REPORTED KARAME'S STATEMENT AND PLO COMMUNIQUE WARNING AGAINST ACTIVITY OF AMB. BROWN AND POSSIBLE AMERICAN MOVES DIRECTED AGAINST PALESTINIANS.

3. AL-BAATH REPORTED KUWAITI AL-RAI AL-AMM SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN EFFORTS IN LEBANON AND CRITICISM OF EGYPTIAN POSITION. ALSO CITED STATEMENTS OF SOME LEBANESE DEPUTIES IN BEIRUTI PUBLICATION "MONDAY MORNING" THAT NEW PRESIDENT MIGHT BE ELECTED THIS WEEK. ACCORDING TO AFP, HOWEVER, MORE TIME MAY BE NEEDED TO COMPLETE ELECTION PROCESS.

4. REFERRING TO PLO COMMUNIQUE AND TO SPEECH BY FATAH LUMINARY SALAH KHALAF EXPRESSING CERTAINTY THAT SYRIA WOULD NOT TURN ITS RIFLES AGAINST PALESTINIANS, TISHRIIN EDITORIALIZED THAT SYRIA HAS ALWAYS AIMED AT CONSOLIDATING SYRO-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS AND PREVENTING OCCURRENCE OF SITUATIONS IN WHICH ARABS CONFRONT OTHER ARABS INCLUDING PALESTINIANS CAUGHT UP IN LEBANESE VIOLENCE. TISHRIIN ASSERTED THAT "SYRIA TRYING TO STOP ARAB BLOODSHED IN LEBANON -- LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN -- IN CONFLICT WHICH ULTIMATELY SERVES NEITHER PALESTINIAN ISSUE NOR QUESTION OF LIBERATING ARAB TERRITORIES. SYRIA WORKS TOWARD DIRECTING ALL RIFLES AT REAL ENEMY IN REAL BATTLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND ZIONISM. EVERY STEP ON ROAD TO EXTINGUISHING FIRE IN LEBANON IS STEP ON ROAD OF PROTECTING PALESTINE REVOLUTION AND ROAD OF RESISTING PLOT AGAINST PALESTINE ISSUE."

5. AL-BAATH EDITORIAL ASSERTED THAT SYRIA HAS AIDED LEBANON WHILE AT SAME TIME PROTECTING PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE LEFTISTS. NOTING THAT SYRIAN ROLE AS MEDIATOR NECESSITATED CONTACTS WITH ALL GROUPS AND THAT SITUATION TOO DELICATE TO ATTEMPT "MAJOR SURGICAL OPERATION" ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LEBANESE BODY POLITIC, AL-BAATH SUGGESTED THAT "IF IT APPEARED TO CERTAIN PARTY OR INDIVIDUAL THAT SYRIA BACKING THIS OR THAT PARTY, THIS PERCEPTION COULD HAVE ARISEN AS RESULT OF ABSENCE OF DETAILS ON WHOLE PICTURE OR FOR REASONS CONNECTED WITH EFFORTS BY SOME PARTIES INVOLVED IN FAN ING FLAMES OF CONFLICT AND DEFEATING SYRIAN EFFORTS TO SOLVE CRISIS. AT HEAD OF THESE FORCES ARE PARTIES TO SINAI AGREEMENT, BECAUSE SYRIA REPRESENTS FORCE OF ARAB CONFRON-

TATION AND RESISTANCE TO ENEMY AND TO AMERICAN PLAN." EDITORIAL CONTINUED THAT EGYPTIAN PRESS HAD ANNOUNCED "SYRIAN INVASION OF LEBANON" AT SAME TIME WASHINGTON POST CLAIMED LEBANON WOULD BE SPLIT BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL AND ASKED , "WHY SHOULD WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE BE SAME SUBJECT OF EGYPTIAN NEWSPAPER HEADLINES THESE DAYS UNLESS THEY REPRESENTED NOT JUST PERSONAL VIEWS OF EGYPTIAN AND AMERICAN JOURNALISTS BUT WERE PART OF CAMPAIGN CASTING DOUBT ON SYRIAN POSITION?" EDITORIAL CONCLUDED THAT SYRIAN EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT GENERATED BY (1) FEAR THAT ADDITIONAL FIGHTING WILL SPAWN "ADDITIONAL DISASTERS" FOR LEBANON AND ARAB SECURITY IN GENERAL, (2) BELIEF THAT SYRIA CANNOT MODIFY ITS STRATEGY SIMPLY BECAUSE VARIOUS PARTIES WANT TO STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION IN ORDER TO WIN SHORT-TERM GAINS, AND (3) LEBANESE SECURITY CANNOT BE ACHIEVED BY CONTINUATION OF CONFLICT.

6. COMMENT: UNTHINKABLE FEW MONTHS BACK THAT PALESTINIAN LEADER WOULD FEEL COMPELLED TO MAKE SPEECH EXPRESSING HIS "CERTAINTY" THAT SYRIA WOULD NOT INITIATE MILITARY ACTION AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON. FACT THAT HE HAS GONE PUBLIC ON THIS ISSUE REVEALS EXTENT TO WHICH MISTRUST HAS GROWN BETWEEN ERSTWHILE PARTNERS. MURPHY

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